

Long COVID- the Lungs

March 21, 2023

Bekele was so excited as he just finished first in his first university 10,000-meter race. He had worked so hard to get to this level of running at a very competitive level. He had been running almost daily for the past several years to get to this level. He was hoping he could one day make the Olympics. However, for the next week he was going to rest and not run except for a very small amount each day. He talked with his coach, and they said that this was fine. The coach also told him that he should work hard in his classes at the university, sleep well each night and take it easy with his friends so he can relax. Bekele was glad to hear this because he was tired from working hard with his studies and his running.

The next day Bekele was tired, and he felt this was from all his hard work in the past months to prepare for this race. Over the next several days he still felt a little tired and really felt he should be getting better but was just not getting better. He also stopped developing a slight sore throat, cough and some nasal congestion. He did not get much worse than this through the rest of the week but did not tell anyone he was sick. He knew if he told his coach he might be able to run next week. When the next week came, and he started back running with the other runners on his team he was a little more tired than normal and the coach asked him if he was ok. Bekele told him he felt like he had a cold over the past week and was a little more tired than normal. The coach told Bekele to rest for the next week and then return to the track team.

Bekele was glad he could rest but during the next week he started having a cough and was more tired than normal. A friend of his said he should go to the university clinic to see why he was not feeling good and coughing. Bekele's friend went with him to the clinic, and they were able to be seen now. The doctor asked Bekele questions about how long the cough had occurred and if he did have COVID infection. Bekele told him months and yes, he did have COVID, but he never got over completely his fatigue and the cough. He did not have any fever, or chills or sweats but just the weakness and cough.

The doctor ordered some blood tests and a chest x-ray for Bekele and told him to return to the clinic tomorrow to review the tests. Bekele was able to get the

blood tests and the chest x-ray done and was glad to get the results tomorrow. On the way home Bekele asked his friend why did he get so sick and the sickness did not go away but his friend did not get sick at all but lived near each other. His friend told him that he could not answer that question of why Bekele did get sick, and he did not but he did know that we were in the hands of Jesus. Bekele had heard about the name and person of Jesus but really did not know anything about who Jesus was and how could our lives be in our hands. His friend told him that Jesus was the creator and the sustainer of all of life and thus our times were in his hands. His friend said that it meant more. It means that Jesus gives us salvation. Bekele wanted to know what this salvation meant.

Bekele and his friend had just arrived home. Bekele invited him into his home to continue their discussion about Jesus and salvation. As they were sitting Bekele's friend told him that salvation was based on two things. First, that all people that have ever lived in this world are sinners and they deserve nothing from Jesus, the Son of God, but eternal hell. Second, is that we can find a way out of eternal hell to eternal life. That eternal life is in heaven with Jesus. Bekele asked how he could come to first avoid hell and second how could he come to have eternal life and not death. His friend told him that Jesus was a man born and lived his whole life about two thousand years ago in what today is Israel.

Bekele asked his friend why Jesus come to what is Israel today and not some other place. His friend replied that this is where Jesus' ancestors came to about one to two thousand years before Jesus was born. It was these people who became Jews and from the Jews in those one to two thousand years prophets who prophesied not just the coming but exactly where he was to be born and to the mother who brought him into this world. Bekele was stunned about the precision of Jesus' birth and asked his friend how did anyone come to know about these prophets and what they prophesied?

Bekele's friend responded to this question by saying all the prophets and what they prophesied was written down in the Bible. Bekele could not believe this about Jesus' coming. Bekele told his friend that neither he nor his parents nor anyone for that matter had their life prophesied. This was truly amazing Bekele told his friend. Then Bekele asked what the purpose of the prophesies of Jesus was as opposed to anyone else and his friend responded that Jesus was a unique person on earth that no one had ever seen or heard of and no one before or since

the birth and life of Jesus. Bekele asked other than the prophecies what was unique about Jesus as just a man.

Bekele's friend responded that Jesus was not just a man but a God man, that is Jesus was the Son of God who had already lived forever before he was born and will live forever after he came to the world. Bekele asked if he is still alive where does this Jesus live so he could meet him as the Son of God. His friend responded that Jesus no longer lived on this earth, but he lives in heaven now and one day will return to bring those who believe in Jesus to come to live with Jesus in heaven forever.

Bekele knew it was late and needed to get to the hospital to get the results of the tests that were done. Bekele and his friend went to the hospital and met with the doctor. The doctor told Bekele that his chest x-ray and his blood counts showed possible ongoing low-grade inflammation and possibly infection. Bekele asked how he could this chronic lung inflammation and possible infection as he never smoked and had no personal or family history of lung problems. The doctor told Bekele and his friend that this is probably from his COVID infection several months ago and certainly those with family history of lung diseases and smoking make it easier to have long term lung issues but that is not the case with Bekele. The doctor continued that it is being seen with some but not all COVID patients developing long term lungs problems and these patients needed to be treated.

Bekele asked what the treatment would be and how long would treatment be needed. The doctor told Bekele and his friend that this is a very good question. First, there are some medications, which can be inhaled into the lungs, which help and this can be used as needed. These medications are helpful to control the inflammation in the lungs and should be able to control the chronic cough, some wheezing and the inability to be more active. As to the question of how long this cough and the shortness of breath will be a problem the doctor told Bekele no one really knows and hopefully this will not be a long-term problem, which worsens over time. The doctor told Bekele that there is no reason the symptoms should not be controlled.

Overall, Bekele and his friend were relieved that this lung problem could be addressed and though somewhat long term it should not hopefully get worse, and this hope was so encouraging. The doctor gave Bekele a prescription and showed

him how to use the new medication you breath into your lungs and told Bekele to come back and see him in a month to see how he is doing. Bekele thought this was a good plan.

As Bekele and his friend were leaving Bekele expressed his hope again of what can happen with his cough and breathing and that this can get better and not get wore. Bekele's friend told him hope is what Bekele really needed medically, which he now has but he also says he needs hope not just in this world, though very important but hope for eternal life. Bekele was agreeing to this point and wanted to know for sure how he could have hope for now in this world but hope for eternal life.

Bekele's friend told him to recall what they had talked about. That is that 'If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved.' Bekele's friend asked Bekele if did he believe that Jesus is Lord of the world and universe, which means Jesus is the Creator of this world, sustainer of every aspect of this world and the judge of this world and Bekele said that he had thought about this over the past day or so and was believing in that fact. Bekele told his friend that he believed in this aspect of the person of Jesus Christ. Bekele's friend asked Bekele was he ready to tell others that he believes that Jesus is Lord and Bekele said yes.

Bekele's friend then asked if Bekele believed in his heart that Jesus died on a Cross about two thousand years ago next to Jerusalem for his sins, then he died for those sins and was buried and three days later rose from the dead. Bekele said that he did. Bekele's friend asked Bekele to pray with him to God and repeat what they had just said and really mean what he said to God and Bekele did that. As Bekele finished that prayer, he started thinking that he really did love Jesus and what he was thinking but also believed how much he knew he had made the right choice and had joy like he had never had before.

Bekele was so glad that he had seen the doctor about his cough and breathing issues and glad there was hope but more importantly he was glad now that he had both now and forevermore hope with his Lord Jesus Christ. Bekele was filled with joy because of the hope he has now and for eternity.